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ABSTRACT

Section I of this paper presents a brief history of liberal education and reviews some of the ideas that have been expressed about its origin, and some of the ideas that have influenced liberal education throughout history. The definition of the purpose of liberal education is Woodring's: "It is the education that liberates men from the bondage of ignorance, prejudice, and provincialism. It enables us to see the whole world and to see ourselves in perspective." Section II examines what is liberal education and reviews some of the other definitions assigned to it by different authors. Section III deals with the aims, purposes and objectives of liberal education. The paper concludes with the thought that while educators have long espoused that one of the cardinal principles of education is to encourage and nurture the ability to think, in reality, most independent thinking and creativity is stifled, and that only a true liberal education and not a general education can help a student become a liberated person. (AF)

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AN HISTORICAL REVIEW OF LIBERAL EDUCATION

by

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"Beyond the Gamma and the Beta rays we need a new and powerful medium that will penetrate into the human heart and lay bare its innermost recesses. That is the challenge of liberal education."

Clarence B. Randall

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LIBERAL EDUCATION

When and where did liberal education first begin? This is a rather difficult question to answer. In fact, I would judge that it is a question that cannot really be answered. Several writers have, however, expressed various ideas in regard to when the first ideas of liberal education might have begun. In the following paragraphs I will reflect some of the ideas expressed about the origin and history of liberal education. Before doing this, however, I would like to establish a definition. Because I will discuss the various definitions of liberal education in a later section of this paper, I will only give one definition at this time. Perhaps Woodring's definition best describes the purpose of liberal education all through history, even though it took many forms. "It is the education that liberates men from the bondage of ignorance, prejudice, and provincialism. It enables us to see the world whole and to see ourselves in perspective."[1] The earliest forms of liberal education surely did not exist in the same way that we think of liberal education today. In fact, in comparison I'm sure, it was not too liberating. However, any early educational ideas which seemed to emphasize the freeing of man, the educating of the whole man or the development of his mind to help him be aware of his own existence would have to be a type of liberal education.

As we look back through history we find that various forms of liberal education have been around for some time. Woodring writes that "liberal education" is a term with at least 2000 years of tradition behind it.[2] History has recorded that some of the early philosophers of ancient history were speaking of a free man.

It has been said that the concept of liberal education first appeared in a slave-owning society, like that of Athens, in which the community was divided into freemen and slaves, rulers and subjects. While the slaves did all the work, the freemen were primarily concerned with ruling and the rights and duties of citizenship. The freemen were also a leisure class. Their education was exclusively in the liberal arts without any utilitarian tinge. The freemen were trained in the reflective pursuit of the good life; their education was unspecialized as well as unvocational; its aim was to produce a rounded person with a full understanding of himself and his place in society and in the cosmos.[3] Socrates was one during this early period who taught in the Athenian city and impressed upon his pupils and the public at large the duty of man to reflect on his beliefs and to criticize his presuppositions. He was an individualist proclaiming that man should form his opinions by his own reasoning and not receive them by social indoctrination.[4]

Perhaps one of the greatest liberal educators of early times was Jesus Christ. Surely he was talking of a free man capable of thinking for himself and of being a responsible citizen. His beliefs on life could only exist in a free liberated man. It is unfortunate, however, that many of his ideas have been so misconstrued and misinterpreted and used as part of an indoctrinary force which produces anything but a liberated man.

Thomas Woody suggests that perhaps the real beginning of liberal education was in China dating back at least to the Chou dynasty in 1122 b.c. This ancient mode, he says, was embodied in the classical works of Confucius and his disciples and constituted the chief intellectual content of liberal education for China's officialdom for two thousand years. Woody goes on to

say that central in the doctrines of Confucianism which aimed preeminently at propriety, morality and social order, is the principle of relationships and duties - those of sovereign and subject, father and son, husband and wife, brother and brother, friend and friend. According to Woody, Western culture would like to claim the origin of liberal education. However, he says that Western progress has over and over demonstrated its capacity for injuring human beings, whose well being, happiness and "good life" are by general ageeement, the primary concern of liberal education. The idea, he says, of "do unto others," familiar to Western ears, was embodied in the Confucian social philosophy: "What a man dislikes in his superiors, let him not display in his treatment of his inferiors; and what he dislikes in his inferiors, let him not display in his service of his superiors....".[5]

Although Aristotle says that Egyptian priests first cultivated the mathematical arts, the origin of liberal education is commonly traced to the Greeks.[6] In the Athenian time, education consisted of a balance between the development of the intellect and the physical. Socrates believed it was a disgrace not to develop the latent strength and grace of the body.[7] Athens knew one pattern of liberal education fit for free men: discipline of life's labors, games, and music.[8] Varro specified the seven liberal arts of the Greeks as grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy, and to them he added architecture and medicine.[9]

Woody sums up the Chinese, Greek, and Roman conceptions of liberal education as having their center of gravity in secular society. It was fit for free men; it was to fit men for freedom and enable them to perform the offices of that freedom.[10]

Following the Graeco-Roman period came the age of Faith, Eternity, and Christianity which resulted in the death of the earlier pattern of liberal education. "The spirit of Christian asceticism opposed four central features of Greek thought on liberal education: "the cult of the body, intellectual and aesthetic culture, the political concept of education for service to the state, and the disparagement of manual labor." It is said that the influence of the Spirit was profound; however, its weight varied with persons, periods and regions. But, fundamentally it was at war with human nature.[12] The Christian movement totally denied anything having to do with the body and nature. It forbade physical exercise for the body, sports of all kinds and anything that wasn't spiritual. Even though the Age of Faith during the Middle Ages tried to deny all liberalism, the worldly nobility of the free cities that rose to power in the eleventh and twelfth centuries were to constitute the social milieu in which liberal learning was to lie fully restored to its original role benefitting free men and fitting them for freedom.[13]

Woody in his discussion, "In Quest of a Liberal Education," mentions how a new world was in the process of becoming. He says that one may readily descry the universal man, the scholar, the gentleman-scholar, the scientist, and the citizen, as the several ideal products sought by the new education in its mutations since the thirteenth century. The central tendency of the new education, he says, centers on the man and his social sphere. "Swiftly grew the conviction, echoed by Pope, that 'The proper study of mankind is man.'"[14] He quotes Vergerius as saying, "We call those studies liberal which are worthy of a free man....". Guarino's studia humanitatis, he says, embraced "learning and training in virtue,"

the activities and pursuits that are proper to man.[15]

Liberal education, as conceived by the early humanist, was committed to certain central principles, which have been current in the literature of educational reform to the present, despite changing patterns of curriculum. Foremost in importance was their recognition of individual nature, variability of capacities and interests, and the necessity of adjusting education to them. Vittorino da Feltre knew that tast and capacity differed in each person. Whatever the teacher might desire, he must "follow nature's lead." No one is apt for all sorts of studies; few have even three or four talents, yet each has a "gift." To discover and develop it, is the teacher's purpose. Vittorino is said to have devoted endless pains trying to satisfy the need of even the least capable student. Vergerius, likewise keenly observant of individual traits, considered alertness, industriousness, eagerness for study, thoroughness, obedience, love of praise, emulation, sensitiveness under punishment and disgrace, and sociability as indices of great promise in a student. Native capacity is the teacher's guide; a youth of limited talent should devote himself to the subject in which he can progress. Alberti would give to every naturally promising mind its best opportunity for development. One may recognize it in speech, gesture, glance, dislike for inactivity, zeal in accomplishment of work begun, frankness, flexibility, and willingness to forgive.[16]

Erasmus, a renaissance humanist in the early fourteenth century, recognized reason as common to the nature of man. Where minds have a strong determination, one should not run counter to "their instruction." Erasmus is of the opinion that the mind is so adaptable that it may master any

subject, if the method be sound, and if the teaching be joined with practice.[17]

Mulcaster, Woody said, would always follow nature's lead. "For as she is unfriendly, wheresoever she is forced, so is she the best guide, that any man can follow, wheresoever she favoreth.... If nature in some children be not so pregnant, as they may take the full benefit of this whole train, yet by applying it wisely, there may be some good done, even in the heaviest wits, and most unapt bodies....". Comenius and Pestalozzi were also greatly concerned with adapting education to the nature of the learner.[18]

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the humanistic pattern of liberal studies constituted a revolt against the spirit, curriculum and institutions of medieval education. Old medieval universities were long hostile to the new age and the new learning. Erasmus heaped scorn upon the monasteries and colleges as seats of idleness and vain pretensions to learning. Ramus, more "extreme in his opposition to medieval and scholastic thought" than any of the humanists, devoted his life to a radical reform of college and university teaching, and died at the hands of assassins as a result of the hostility his reforms had stirred.[19]

In respect to curriculum, the humanists struck at theology and dialectic, particularly the cult of Aristotelianism, regnant in the universities since the dawn of the thirteenth century. Petrarch saw Aristotle as a truly great philosopher, but thought him in error all his life. Ramus, with humanistic zeal, carried the attack on Aristotle to absurdity, defending the thesis that "all that Aristotle has said is false."[20]

It is reported that in the fourteenth century there was a beginning of grammar's restoration as chief of the seven arts.[21] Progress to recover the classics and humanities slowly came about. Woody states that this return of the study of the classics resulted in the first pattern of a liberal education being founded largely, if not wholly, on the translation and study of the Greek and Latin languages.[22] Through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the true liberal education mainly consisted of the study of the classics.

Because the petty bourgeoisie and commoners generally found the classics of slight attraction, there was a turn to the vernacular languages and literatures, and to the sciences as they developed. Woody remarks that, internally the classical studies suffered from a tendency common to other systems: "Means became ends." "Let education be for the quickening of independent thought" - was in full accord with the high ideal of humanism. Great authors, properly studied, serves well that end. But, having found the "best" authors, schools transmitted them into ends.[23] This resulted in the beginning of a slow decay.

Classic humanism, Woody reports, has made a profoundly important and lasting contribution to Western culture, both as liberal education and as scholarship. He goes on to say that singularly, both the "progressives" of later centuries and the teaching classicist, warring against each other, seem wholly oblivious of the fact that many basic principles of humanist education are the same that "progressives" espoused. In respect to principles, the humanist conception of liberal education still lives, obscured under the subject matter, and now applied or seeking application in a broad social scene which the wildest dreams of early humanists could not anticipate.[24]

Without a doubt the humanist and the classics still play a major rule in the liberal education of today - especially on some college campuses that use the great books as the core of their liberal arts curriculum, such as St. John's College.

Robert Maynard Hutchins is a real believer in the study of the classics and the great books, and instituted the study of such while president of Chicago University. He writes in his book titled, Education for Freedom, "The liberal arts are the arts of freedom. To be free, a man must understand the tradition in which he lives. A great book is one which yields up through the liberal arts a clear and important understanding of our tradition. An education which consisted of the liberal arts as understood through great books and of great books understood through liberal arts would be one and the only one which would enable us to comprehend the tradition in which we live. It must follow that if we want to educate our students for freedom, we must educate them in the liberal arts and in the great books.[25]

The foregoing is not intended to be a complete treatment of the history of liberal education but only a brief sketch of its origin and some of the ideas that have influenced liberal education throughout history.

WHAT IS LIBERAL EDUCATION

Every author seems to have his own definition for liberal education. Liberal education is often used synonymously with the term general education. Some writers have drawn a distinct difference between general and liberal education while others do not differentiate between them. There also appears to be much similarity between the definition of educa-

tion, and general and liberal education.

The following is a discussion of several of the various definitions of education, general education, and liberal education. I have also drawn a comparison to vocational or professional education in order to form a clearer distinction between these several types of education.

Cole, in his book, Liberal Education in a Democracy,[26] has reported what the American Historical Association has attempted to formulate as the philosophy and purpose of education as a whole. The association, Cole said, assumes, "that education is concerned with the development of rich and many sided personalities capable of cooperating in a social order designed to facilitate the creation of the largest possible number of rich and many sided personalities." To this end, he reported, the purpose of education is "to prepare the younger generation for life in a highly complex industrial society that is committed to the ideal of democracy and equality of opportunity for personal growth, that places its faith in intelligence rather than force....". Cole went on to report that the National Education Association and the American Association of School Administrators regard education as "the key to an abundant life" for American youth.

In looking at some of the various definitions for general education one finds that there is much similarity among them.

Charles Gross made a survey in 1952 of 137 colleges of the AACTE to see what definition for general education appeared to be the most acceptable. Eighty-three chose the following definition: "The development of the knowledge, skills and abilities which are the common possession of educated persons as individuals and as citizens in a free society.[27]

The report of the Harvard Committee, titled General Education in a Free Society, defines general education as: "....that part of a student's whole education which looks first of all to his life as a responsible human being and citizen."[28]

T. R. McConnell has defined general education as that education which enables men and women to live rich and satisfying lives and to undertake the responsibilities of citizenship in a free society.[29]

Daniel Bell, in The Reform of General Education, spoke of general education as the education that liberates the young people by making them aware of the forces that impel them from within and constrict them from without.[30]

General education, Cowling and Davidson discuss, is as its name implies, the education common to our "genus" or kind; the education needed to enable an individual to become an intelligent and cooperative member of society rather than that designed to bring out the distinctive features of his own personality. They say if an individual is to become an effective member of the group in which he lives, he must first of all gain a mastery of the tools needed to share fully in the common life: manual dexterity, self-expression through speech and writing, the ability to read with understanding, the ready use of numbers and mathematic methods, and psychology for self-analysis and self-realization.[31]

They further speak of general education as having a four-sided framework. The first side is the one that has already been mentioned; the acquisition of the tools needed to share fully in the common life: the math, speech and writing, a good language sense, and psychology for self-analysis and self-realization.

The second side to this framework is the part that helps one realize that man does not live in isolation; he is a part of a human society which he must understand if he is going to relate effectively to it. This side would include such studies as social sciences - economics, government, sociology, religion, education, anthropology, and geography to broaden our general education to the point that we would feel at home among the members and institutions of our society.[32]

The third side to our general education framework is the study of the natural sciences. This includes becoming aware of the forces of our universe, its energy and various forms, etc. The studies here would be geology, geography, botany, zoology, physiology, and the other areas which acquaint one with his physical universe.[33]

Cowling and Davidson go on to say that man lives, however, not merely in himself, in society, and in the physical world, but also in the stream of time, the fourth side of general education. Behind the present individual stretch thousands of years of recorded history, masterpieces of music, literature, and art, and the philosophical and religious ideas of billions of ancestors. Before him lies the unknown future, a tremendous challenge to his thought. No one can begin to become acquainted with his entire human heritage. But, the study of the humanities, the study of our human inheritance, can show the student some of the noblest attempts of man to discover and create experiences and objects which have more than material value and can help him understand the meaning of human life in terms of its aspirations and ideals. The student needs to realize, whereas the sciences seek to discover, describe, analyze, and clarify facts, the humanities seek to appraise, judge, and criticize values. Science asks, "Is it true or false"? The humanities demand, "Is it good or bad"?[34]

The Harvard report mentions the importance of heritage.[35] It discusses to some length how this continuation of our culture depends a great deal upon the inherited view of man and society and that education has the function to pass it on.

The next question that one might ask himself is, if this is general education what then is liberal education and how do they relate, if at all? At the risk of being a bit redundant, I will repead what Woodring said liberal education is. He said it "is the education that liberates man from bondage of ignorance, prejudice, and provincialism. It enables us to see the world whole and to see ourselves in perspective. It is the education appropriate for free men who must make wise independent decisions - in the home, on the job, in the voting booth, and on the jury stand.[36]

Cowling and Davidson make a clear distinction in how liberal education differs from general education. They explain how liberal education is built upon the frame of general education. Liberal education, they say, is the "unique patternmaker" which will select the threads and weave the manifold permutations and combinations that constitute personality. Thus, truly liberal education is much more difficult than general education to teach and to attain, for it places greater emphasis upon the higher mental powers. Liberal education, Cowling and Davidson say, demands logical reasoning and creative imagination. It is called liberal education because it liberates man from the confinements of mind-slavery and opens to him the heritage of the "liberi" or free men. It is, therefore, the function of liberal education to use every device at its command to understand and develop this uniqueness of each individual.[37] The choices of the student must be wisely guided if the overall pattern of personality is to have

symetry and beauty. If it is to avoid being haphazard, amorphous, and disjointed, it must possess harmony and must hang together. Its parts must be intimately related; there must be no separation of the individual, his tools, his universe, his society, his time, and his art. In the developed ability to perceive these relationships lies wisdom as contrasted with mere information. Liberally educated persons should become equally integrated reflections of the best that is within themselves and the civilization of which they are a part. The Greeks had a motto: "Man is the measure of all things"; certainly the resultant man is the measure of liberal education.[38]

The Harvard Committee felt that there is little difference if any between general and liberal education. They stated that, clearly, general education has somewhat the meaning of liberal education, except that, by applying to high school as well as to college, it envisages an immensely greater number of students and thus escapes the "invidium" which, rightly or wrongly, attaches to liberal education in the minds of some people. They go on and say, if one clings to the root meaning of liberal as that which befits or helps to make free men, then general and liberal education have identical goals. The one may be thought of as an earlier stage of the other, similar in nature but less advanced in degree.[39] T. R. McConnell suggests that they differ mainly in degree and not in kind, with general education being liberal education with its matter and method shifted from its original aristocratic intent to the service of democracy.[40]

Cole, in his book, Liberal Education in a Democracy, wrote in 1940 that it is felt by some that liberal education stresses the classical heritage of man, whereas general education takes a more realistic approach to

the school's job.[41] In his chapter III discussing "The Criteria of a Liberal Education" he made this statement about liberal education. "What is a liberal education if not a critical and appreciative introduction of the individual to his "Weltanschauung" (world) that will engage his creative energies: (1) to distinguish what is of survival value in the cultural heritage of the race; (2) to carry forward these constituents; and (3) to expand and enrich his own contribution to the meaning and worth of life?[42]

There does seem to be a consensus, however, that it's not a case of a general education versus a liberal education but a combination of the two. Cowling and Davidson indicate that our lives as individuals begin simultaneously with our lives as members of the human race. Liberal education, therefore, must begin as soon as general education, and both must continue throughout life. Although, they say, the former is built upon the latter, it is not necessary for general education to be completed before liberal education is started. The two are complementary, not competitive.[43]

The next question one might ask is, if this is general and liberal education, how then do they relate to vocational or professional education?

Cowling and Davidson suggest that the order of development should be general education first, to make man feel at home in the physical, social, and intellectual world; then liberal education, to bring out the pattern of his individuality, to prepare him for responsible leadership; and finally, specialized or professional education to induce the skills by which he can make a living. But general education should never stop; like a growing circle, its circumference should always touch on new areas of the unknown which need exploration. Also they say that liberal and special-

ized education can reach down into the early years, beginning as an awakening interest and gradually growing into a true vocation or "calling" which unites all the strands of understanding the world and making a living into a complete and rewarding life.[44]

AIMES, PURPOSES, AND OBJECTIVES OF LIBERAL EDUCATION

Having defined liberal education, I wish now to discuss some of the aims and objectives of liberal education and what it can do for man.

The Harvard Committee believes that the task of modern democracy is to preserve the ancient ideal of liberal education and to extend it as far as possible to all members of the community. They believe that the touchstone of a liberal education is to produce a liberated man who believes in the equality of human beings and the good life and education for all so that man can truly govern himself. In order to do this, they say, his must be a mind capable of self-criticism; he must lead that self-examined life, which according to Socrates, is alone worthy of a free man. Thus, he will possess inner freedom, as well as social freedom. Second, he is universal in his motives and sympathies, for the civilized man is a citizen of the entire universe; he has overcome provincialism, he is objective, and is a "spectator of all time and all existence."[45] This surely becomes the task or aim of liberal education in a democracy.

Cole indicates six objectives for a liberal education in a liberal arts college.[45] They are:

1. To introduce youth to the scientific temper of our world;
2. To give youth the opportunity to nurture and develop the esthetic sense and approaches to the world of man and nature;
3. To give youth the right to be informed of the possibility of social democracy;

4. To lead youth to grasp what it means to live democratically and be responsible persons;

5. To introduce youth to the history and philosophy of the various religions; and

6. To afford youth a comprehensive understanding of the language medium of the educated person.

Perhaps another way of looking at the purpose of a liberal education is from what Palmer has quoted Henry Churchill King as stating that the aim of a liberal arts college is "the education of the entire man - physical, intellectual, esthetic, moral and religious - an education looking pre-eminently to the service of community and nation, the indubitable obligation of the privileged. It means to foster the spirit of a rational, ethic and Christian democracy. It aims to train its students personally to share in the great intellectual and spiritual achievements of the race, to think in world terms, to feel with all humanity, to cherish world purposes."[47]

Richardson, in A Study of the Liberal College, stated that, "Our aim may, therefore, be stated as the stimulation and development of those gifts of intellect which nature has endowed the student, so that he becomes first, a better companion to himself through life, and second, a more efficient force in his contacts with his fellow men."[48]

One of the primary purposes of liberal education is to develop in man the ability to reason and think. I mean to really think and not be ready to just accept everything, but first to only accept it as food for thought. I see very little education today that really helps develop the ability to think. In fact, I see most education discouraging real open thinking, especially if it might cause question as to what is being done and why. Perhaps Homer Cooper in his book, Education for a Free Society,

sums up quite well the problem that seems to be so prevelent in regard to the ability of people to think. He says, "thinking enables the world to attain new heights. Doing enables it to hold its own."[49] Most people, he says, cannot do thinking which can be of any consequence. Perhaps they have not been taught to do so. Perhaps they have not only not been taught to do so, but have even been taught in such a way as to prevent their learning to do so on their own initiative. Perhaps, he goes on to say, they have been kept so busy in the hours in which they were taught that they had no time to learn to think. Perhaps their elders and teachers held ability to think in so low esteem in comparison with such matters as apparent ability to memorize, conformity to approved beliefs, and other such traits as these as to cause most people to have a wholly erroneous estimate of its importance.[50] I agree that what Cooper is saying here is sad but true of many of our educational institutions of today.

Often the greatest contribution of liberal education is overlooked at the time of the opportunity to obtain it and a practical education becomes far more desired. Wriston has said that one of the most stubborn obstacles to a proper appreciation of a liberal education is the latent suspicion that it is impractical. He says that the prejudice that a liberal education will not "pay on the investment" is very deep-seated and difficult to overcome.[51] John Dewey once said, "Theory is, in the end, the most practical of all things" - the most practical because it has the broadest application.[52]

Woodring talks about how vocational education provides the best means for getting the first job. But twenty years later, when the same man is ready to move up to the higher echelons, his technical training will have become less important than his liberal education. He says liberal education makes for adaptability. If it does not, it is not truly liberal, no

matter what degrees it may lead to.[53]

I'm not saying that a man does not need any vocational or professional training because he definitely does. It's just that he needs more than the vocational training if he is going to continue to exist as a free happy individual.

Without a doubt the greatest single thing that true liberal education can do for mankind is to bring about peace. I personally don't think we will ever have total peace until we have completely liberated men. Clarence B. Randall in The Randall Lectures sums up this idea very well. He says, ".... the nebulous task of making peace, as distinguished from making war, is so abstract in its impact that it fails to rouse the businessman. He will make any sacrifice financial or otherwise, that may be required in support of war, because he understands war; but he is not prepared as yet to make an equal sacrifice to advance the cause of peace, because he does not yet understand the making of peace. Technology as such does not create peace. The making of peace rests with the minds and the spirits of men, both of which are cultivated by liberal education, as distinguished from the training of the specialist."[54]

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Having read what many authors have to say in regard to liberal education, I would now like to reflect some of my own thoughts and ideas.

Most people whom I have encountered in my short span of life seem to be far more concerned with general education than liberal education. I especially feel this is true of most educators whom I have known. I say this because I have met few educators who seem to encourage real thinking. In fact, I feel that most teachers are threatened by students who think. The thinking student becomes unpredictable and cannot be as easily manipulated or controlled as the automaton-type of student whom most teachers are trying to produce. We educators have espoused for a long time that one of the cardinal principles of education is to encourage and nurture the ability to think. In reality, however, I don't think we are doing this.

It seems to me that we are far more concerned with developing an individual that will be a good follower, a good citizen, a good family man, a good worker, and a good church-goer, than we are in helping an individual discover his own potentials and be an individual no matter what the costs. We want our students to be well-adjusted and fit into society--not rock the boat of society and suggest change. Automaton seems to be the best name for the product that most of our schools are producing. Our educational system proclaims to encourage students to be individuals yet in reality encourages them to follow the herd and be anonymous - that's the best way to get along. We all know that the student who thinks and has his own ideas and refuses to just follow along is soon called a non-conformist and often finds himself in trouble with the teacher.

Dr. E. Paul Torrance, Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Minnesota says, that "society is downright savage in its treatment of creative people, particularly when they are young." He goes on to say that most teachers prefer a pupil with a high I.Q. to a highly creative pupil, just as some school administrators prefer less creative teachers to the more creative ones. "To be creative, he says, is to be unpredictable, and the unpredictable always makes us uneasy." We have long known that it is natural for man to learn by discovering things for himself, yet we continue almost always to insist that he learn by authority. Although children can be taught ways to develop their creative-thinking abilities, teachers in general are not appreciably concerned about doing so. The essential difference, I'm told, between a child who gets high grades and one who is innately creative is that the first is primarily a learner and the second more venturesome and original in his ideas.

I feel very strongly about the idea that our schools seem to be doing just the opposite of liberating our youth. Instead, they are stifling all the creativity and individuality out of them. It is a well-known fact that most children have been just about totally stifled by the fourth-grade level. I think John Holt, in his book, How Children Fail,[55] points out quite well what seems to be happening in most of our American schools. He feels that today's school child is filled with fear. We make them afraid to gamble, afraid to experiment, afraid to try the difficult and the unknown. Many a parent too, he says, is afraid--afraid that his child will be thought different. Being different does not appear to bother young children, but year by year they become more afraid of being individual and of being themselves. To see and know that this is the case, just about makes

me cry for mankind. I do not see much hope for the "Great American Society" except through more "Summerhills" and "Antiochs".

A true liberal education seems to be the only answer, as I see it. By this, I do not mean just more general education as seems to be the general direction. Unfortunately, I'm afraid that most people don't see any difference between the two. Perhaps this is because they are far from being a liberated person themselves. I believe that most people are afraid to really think. To do so is often quite frightening. To most the unknown is very threatening. Bell quotes Frued as having said, "It takes a high degree of sophistication to believe in chance." For the primitive, says Bell, knowledge is unsettling because it leads not to truth but to uncertainty and tentativeness. Few people can live comfortably in a shifting universe.[56]

Keats said the strength of Shakespear was that he had the power of remaining in uncertainty without any irritable reaching after fact or reason. Yet without such exploration there can be no possibility of freedom, the freedom defined as self-imposed and self-determining choice.[57]

As I said before, I see a tremendous difference between a liberal education and a general education. We must strive to make all education more liberal. As I see it:

general education ties one to his culture,

liberal education frees one from his provincial ties.

general education helps you fit in,

liberal education helps one reason and think as an individual.

general education does not usually produce thinkers,

the liberated man must always question - then and only then can he be a wise man.

general education tends to produce followers,

liberal education frees men to become leaders.

general education indoctrinates, inhibits, conforms,

liberal education educates, frees, liberates;

general education teaches you to live as John Doe in America;

liberal education enables you to realize yourself as an individual being in the universe.

I would like to summarize with a statement given by Clarence B. Randall. "The goal to be sought is the genuine liberation of the mind, the acquisition of that intellectual courage and flexibility which permit thought readily to adapt itself to all of the changing facets of life. This liberation of the mind is a lifetime job. It begins with our earliest recorded impression, and it must go on as long as the mind continues to function."[58]

FOOTNOTES

1. Paul Woodring, The Higher Learning In America: A Reassessment. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1968, p. 201.
2. Ibid.
3. Harvard Report, General Education In a Free Society. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Press, 1945, p. 52.
4. Ibid., p. 48.
5. Thomas Woody, Liberal Education for Free Men. Philadelphia: University Pennsylvania Press, 1951, p. 7.
6. Ibid., p. 19.
7. Ibid., p. 22.
8. Ibid., p. 36.
9. Ibid., p. 75.
10. Ibid., p. 88.
11. Ibid., p. 90.
12. Ibid., p. 93.
13. Ibid., p. 131.
14. Ibid., p. 162-63.
15. Ibid., p. 164.
16. Ibid., pp. 166-67.
17. Ibid., pp. 167-68.
18. Ibid., p. 168.
19. Ibid., p. 182.
20. Ibid., p. 182.
21. Ibid., p. 182.
22. Ibid., p. 186.
23. Ibid., p. 191.
24. Ibid., p. 190.

25. Robert Maynard Hutchins, Education For Freedom. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943, p. 14.

26. Steward G. Cole, Liberal Education in a Democracy. New York: Harper and Brothers publishers, 1940. p. 55.

27. Chalmar A. Gross, Implementing Programs of General Education for Teachers. AACTE Study Series, 1953.

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29. T. R. McConnell, et. al. "General Education," Encyclopedia of Educational Research. New York; 1950, p. 489.

30. Daniel Bell, The Reforming of General Education. New York: Columbia University Press, 1966, p. 152.

31. Donald J. Cowling and Carter Davidson, Colleges for Freedom. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947, p. 44-45.

32. Ibid., pp. 45-46.

33. Ibid., p. 46.

34. Ibid., pp. 48-49.

35. Harvard, op. cit., p. 42.

36. Woodring, op. cit., p. 201.

37. Cowling & Davidson, op. cit., p. 47.

38. Ibid., p. 49.

39. Harvard, op. cit., p. 52.

40. McConnell, op. cit., p. 489.

41. Cole, op. cit., p. 291.

42. Ibid., p. 62.

43. Cowling & Davidson, op. cit., p. 49.

44. Ibid., pp. 51-52.

45. Harvard, op. cit., p. 53.

46. Cole, op. cit., p. 289.

47. Archie M. Palmer, ed. The Liberal Arts College Movement. New York: Little and Ives Company, 1930, p. 71.

48. Leon B. Richardson, A Study of The Liberal Arts College. Hanover, New Hampshire: 1924, p. 17.

49. Homer E. Cooper, Education For A Free Society. New York: Exposition Press, 1957, p. 49.

50. Ibid., p. 52.

51. Henry M. Wriston, The Nature of a Liberal College. Appleton, Wisconsin: Lawrence College Press, 1937, p. 4.

52. Woodring, op. cit., p. 200.

53. Ibid., pp. 200-201.

54. Clarence B. Randall, The Randall Lectures. New York: Robertson Printing Corporation, 1957, p. 14.

55. John Holt, How Children Fail. New York: Dell Publishing Company Inc., 1964.

56. Bell, op. cit., p. 152.

57. Ibid., p. 153.

58. Randall, op. cit., p. 34.

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